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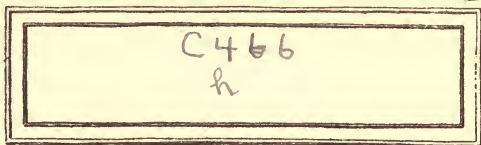
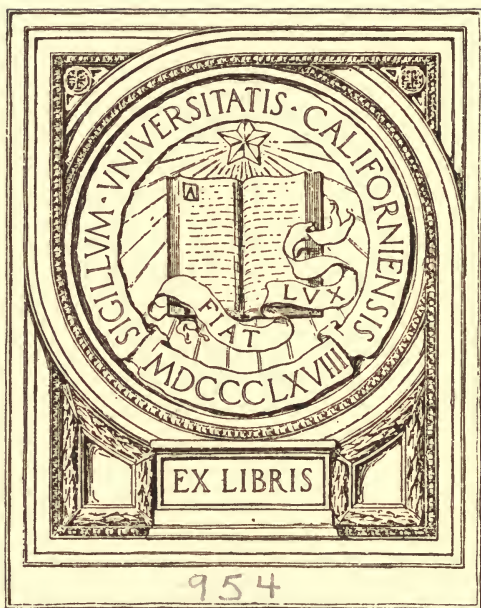


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# HOMERIC SCENES

HECTOR'S FAREWELL AND THE  
WRATH OF ACHILLES

BY  
JOHN JAY CHAPMAN







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JOHN JAY CHAPMAN



NEW YORK

LAURENCE J. GOMME

1914

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## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

HECTOR. *Son to Priam, King of Troy and leader of the Trojan Army.*

ANDROMACHE. *Wife to Hector.*

PARIS. *Younger brother to Hector and husband to Helen of Troy.*

PRIAM. *King of Troy.*

ACHILLES. *The greatest warrior among the Greeks.*

PATROCLUS. *Friend to Achilles.*

AGAMEMNON. *King of Argos and leader of the Greek Army.*

ODYSSEUS	}	<i>Captains of the Greek Army.</i>
NESTOR		
AJAX		
PHOENIX		

ANTILOCHUS. *A Greek soldier.*

THERSITES. *A boorish Greek campfollower.*

LYKAON. *A captured lad, son to King Priam.*

AUTOMEDON. *Servant to Achilles.*

BRISEIS. *A captured Phrygian maid, slave to Achilles.*

*Soldiers, messengers, heralds, etc.*

SCENES:    *Troy and the Greek camp.*

I.

HECTOR'S FAREWELL



## HECTOR'S FAREWELL

SCENE. *On the Walls of Troy.*

*Enter* ANDROMACHE *followed by a nurse*  
*carrying a child.*

ANDRO. O Nurse he is not here! Set down  
the child

And run to find my Hector. Go, girl, go!

Hector is in the town. Hector in Troy

And I not see him! I have run about

Like a mad woman. Everyone but me

Has seen my Hector, Gyas on the wall

And Androcleides in the market-place,

And Phene from the casement of the  
palace,—

Saw the great helm go dancing up the street

With Mars behind it. Wherefore leave the  
fields

Except to see his wife? O Nurse, he's dead!

And these be shadows sent to warn the  
world

And kill me ere the sight of his dead  
corse—

(*Enter* HECTOR) Hector!

HECTOR. Sweetheart, I could not find thee  
at the house.

Nay, 'tis not yet so bad. What, never a  
word?

ANDRO. I dreamed that you were dead.

HECTOR. Dreams are but dreams  
And phantoms phantoms. I have dreamed  
myself  
Sometimes—

ANDRO. Why came you not directly to the  
palace?

HECTOR. Business of War. Our Paris does  
not fight;  
But lolls in Helen's parlors all day long,  
Examining his arms. The golden spoil  
Of blazoned armor more delights his heart  
Than reeky war.

ANDRO. The coward!

HECTOR. Say not so.  
He fears not death, but fears to spoil his  
locks.

*(The Nurse offers the child to HECTOR;  
but the child clings and turns away.)*

ANDRO. It is the crested terror of thy  
casque.

Doff thy great helm, my warrior ; come, my  
boy,  
Hector's thy father.  
In years to come thou'lt know it.

(*To* HECTOR)                      Set it down  
And bless the urchin with a man's embrace  
Before you plunge into the tide of war.

(HECTOR sets the helmet on the ground, embraces the child silently, sets him on the ground also. The child occupies himself with the helmet.)

HECTOR. 'Tis little for myself  
I dread in Hades, where the demi-gods  
Greet the last comer from the bloody field  
With hands that heal his gashes,—add a  
name  
To the old heroes. They await me there,  
I know't. But thee, Andromache, but thee!  
To see thee carted as the spoil of war  
And set to spin in Argos,—all day long  
Tending the loom, or with unwilling hands  
Fetching the jug of water from some  
spring  
In far Arcadia. “Mark yon Trojan slave”  
Says someone, “'Tis the wife of Plumed  
Hector,

Who fought in bygone days for bygone  
Troy.”

This is thy portion when, deprived of me,  
Thou fendest for thyself in slavery.

But as for me, the blessed soil of earth  
Shall wrap me round before I learn of it.

ANDRO. Bring not a dismal future into  
life

By horrid prophecies. My dream was false  
And, haply, so is thine. I have thee still;  
Troy stands, the gods assist;  
And our unceasing supplications rise  
In all the temples.

*(Enter servant with a golden cup.)*

Sirrah, what is this?

SERVANT. The Queen, Lord Hector's  
mother, Hecuba,

Sends him a cup of sacrificial wine;  
That having poured to the immortal gods  
Libations of effectual piety  
He may refresh him with a needed  
draught.

For he exhausts himself to save the rest;  
And wine doth bless a tired hero's heart.

HECTOR. Tell my fond mother that the  
honeyed wine



Would but unnerve me. Nor with hands  
unwashed

Dare I to pour libations unto Zeus.

I cannot pray to Kronos' Cloudy Son

While spattered with the dirty blood of  
war.

But let the Queen besiege Athena's Might

With fragrant, hotly-burning holocausts,

If haply ruth may touch the goddess' heart

For Troy, for Trojan wives and Trojan  
babes,

And she avert the doom. (*Exit servant.*)

Enough of grief!

All's well. Come youngster mine, another  
prayer:—

To Zeus and all the gods!

(*Takes the child and holds him high in  
air.*)

May'st thou grow great, to be the boast of  
Troy,—

Like Hector's self;—to rule o'er Ilium

In pride of might and virtue, till they cry

“He's better than his Father!” So they  
shall,

When thou art tramping home with bloody  
spoil

Man-killed in war,—to make a mother  
glad.

ANDRO. Alas, sweet husband, you do kill  
the child.

He's lost in thee with wonder.

HECTOR. Darling heart,  
I must be gone. One smiling hug the more.  
Andromache, my sweetheart, be not sad;  
Save by the hand of Fate I cannot fall.  
Hero and coward enter Hades' Gate  
Through the same deathless, shunless Des-  
tiny,—

Apportioned and decreed. My blessed  
wife,

Go to thy house and distaff: at the looms  
Set maids to weaving. War's for warriors,  
And my employment is to fight for Troy.  
(*Enter servant.*)

SERVANT. Paris, my lord, doth seek thee.

HECTOR. . . . . Let him come.

SERVANT. He hath o'er all the city coursed  
about.

HECTOR. I warrant, hath he! Like a stall-  
fed horse,  
Breaking his bridle, trusting in his heels  
With head up-reared and mane that fans  
his flank,

He courses to the flowing river-pools.  
With sure and easy strength the springy  
loins  
Up-bear him toward the pasture of the  
steeds.  
So Paris, in bright armor like a sun  
Runs, glittering through the town. I wager  
now  
He comes to taunt me that I hinder him,  
And keep him from the fray. (*Enter PARIS.*)

PARIS. Good brother, thou art valiant.  
None can deny thy courage. 'Tis thy whim  
If thou dost linger here while all's at stake.  
Is it my dallying that holds thee back?

HECTOR. On, brother Paris!—All our  
wordy scores  
We'll settle when Zeus smiles, bidding us  
rest  
And drain our Cup of Safety to the gods,  
What time we drive the Achaians out of  
Troy.

(*Exeunt HECTOR and PARIS.*)

ANDRO. He's gone.—Come, child; he's  
gone.  
Hector's farewell is over: he is gone!

He's for his death—and never shall I see  
The helmet, hear the voice or feel the hand  
Of my great hero more. He's gone!  
A clank of mailed feet shall herald him  
Bearing his body. Nurse, he's gone.  
My Hector's gone. He's gone!

END

II.

THE WRATH OF ACHILLES



## THE WRATH OF ACHILLES

### 1. THE EMBASSY TO ACHILLES.

SCENE I. *Before the Tent of* AGAMEMNON. (*Enter ODYSSEUS and NESTOR. ODYSSEUS carries a lantern.*)

ODYSSEUS (*knocking*). Lord of the Host!  
Atreides! Agamemnon!

AGAMEMNON (*within*). Who calls?

NESTOR. Greeks and thy friends. A parley.

(*Enter AGAMEMNON*)

AGAMEMNON. Odysseus, many - minded  
counsellor,  
And thou, old Nestor! But what would ye  
here?

ODYSSEUS. We could not sleep.

AGAMEMNON. Nor I; but stark upright  
I wait the daylight's trembling. Have ye  
news?

ODYSSEUS. Nay, 'tis the best we have that  
we have none.

The cry we dread is "Hector and the  
torch!"

Our ships in flames and we in blinding  
smoke

With Hector, like a wolf upon our fold,  
To rend the bleating fugitives of Greece  
While we run seaward!

AGAMEMNON. Hector's a deity.

ODYSSEUS. A god's behind him: 'tis for  
that we come.

AGAMEMNON. What god? How mean you?  
Speak no riddles, man;  
The time for wit is past.

ODYSSEUS. O, Atreus' son,  
Where force hath failed the time for wit is  
come.

Thou lumbering king of men, assume thy  
mind,  
For bluster is blown out.

AGAMEMNON. I am the King!

ODYSSEUS. And we poor subjects come to  
hint a tale  
Of dark injustice,—punished by a god.

AGAMEMNON. Achilles!

ODYSSEUS. Ay, Achilles in his tent.



Achilles, our great warrior, Thetis' son,  
Godlike, invincible, the Wrath of Greece,  
The man among our pigmies, mourns  
apart,

And through his prayers destroys us. Aga-  
memnon,

Bethink thee who it was that seized his  
bride,

Briseis, whom his shining spear had  
reaped.

His war-won bride thou tookest to thy tent.

AGAMEMNON. 'Tis false, Odysseus! By  
the throne of Zeus!

I but assigned her—

ODYSSEUS. Reassigned, my lord;

For first thou didst assign her unto him.

And the retaking wrought such heat in him  
As kindled fire-born vengeance in the god,  
Who now, descending in a lambent tongue,  
Licks at thy camp and army. That great  
hurt

Entered his bosom. Like a noble hound,  
Whom some unwitting master hath mis-  
used,

He grieves to the quick.

NESTOR. Achilles in his tent  
Handles the glorious lyre, bridged with gold

The same that in the sack of Etiona  
He chose from out the spoil. The warrior  
Now charms his heart-ache with a melody—  
Sings to his thought some old heroic lay.  
Patroclus sits the while in silent grief  
Attendant on his master's bitter mood.

AGAMEMNON. And what is this to me? He  
hath his whim  
And, when the fancy seizes him, will fight;  
Yea, till it do, not all Odysseus' wit  
Can budge him from his grievance and his  
dream.

Cunning were wasted here.

ODYSSEUS. Not time for wit?  
Thou senseless Agamemnon, all's at stake  
And thy unyielding heart, blind as the  
mole.

AGAMEMNON. What say'st thou?

ODYSSEUS. Thy injustice is the cause  
That launched the angered Deity at  
Greece.

Yea, thou art numb with fateful insolence.  
Wake! or we perish.

AGAMEMNON. Comrade, I have sinned?  
By folly or self-will?

ODYSSEUS. Ay, there's the point.

Injustice,—winged madness is let loose,  
And fate doth clutch thee.

AGAMEMNON.                    Let amends be made:  
Seven tripods that no touch of flame have  
felt,

As many talents of refined gold,  
My horses swift—the fleet-foot champions!  
If his appeasement lie within my gift  
He shall not go unheaped with spoil of  
war.

And for the maid Briseis, send her back  
Accompanied by cunning needle maids—  
The same I took at Lesbos—seven they  
are—

The fairest women ever found in Greece.  
And add what promised plunder out of  
Troy

With twenty slaves from Helen's bed-  
chamber,

And what of wealth he wills. Yea, let him  
ask

A slice of Argos. He shall wed my girl  
And half my kingdom go along with her.

ODYSSEUS. Is it thy will, thou tower of  
Atreus' might,

We bear this message to him?

AGAMEMNON.

Go at once.

ODYSSEUS. What say you, Nestor?

NESTOR. Age and skill together  
May soothe the yeasty boy. But give me  
leave

As one who knew his father and that race  
Of demi-gods, now scattered and obscured,  
Of whom there shines some glint in this  
young man.

All must be gently done. If Phoenix, now,  
Old Phoenix who was young Achilles'  
nurse—

Phoenix has held Achilles in his arms,  
Of none but Phoenix would he take his  
food—

(And give it back at times on Phoenix'  
tunic!)

Phoenix must go—and let two heralds  
lead—

And Ajax whom the great Achilles loves.  
My lords, I think with such an embassy  
We may engage our erring hero's mind.

AGAMEMNON. Let it be done! And add  
what words ye will

Of Agamemnon's not unkingly ruth.  
Mine is the sceptre, mine the kingly race,  
And be the message spoken,—from the  
King.

## THE EMBASSY TO ACHILLES

SCENE II. *Before ACHILLES' Tent.*

(ACHILLES, *with a lyre in his hand, sits upon piles of skins and rugs. PATROCLUS sits before him.*)

ACHILLES. Such was the lay, Patroclus.—  
Stay, the epilogue!

To Heracles was given  
Long labor and the after life of Heaven.  
To me,—  
A breath of life: then immortality.

'Tis they that rule us, those old demi-gods,  
Patroclus; and the gests of Heracles—  
Sung o'er our cradles,—build our monu-  
ments.

The myths possess us: through our agony  
They work to new fruition.

PATROCLUS. (*pause*)                      They were men.

ACHILLES. Yes, men, and something more.

PATROCLUS.                      Footsteps, my lord.

*(Two heralds enter and stand aside; then ODYSSEUS and NESTOR; then PHOENIX and AJAX. ACHILLES and PATROCLUS rise mechanically. ACHILLES still holding the lyre, looks from one to another of the visitors.)*

ACHILLES. Welcome, good friends—  
And I myself unhinged—My dearest  
friends,—  
Welcome to all. (*To PATROCLUS*) Get wine:  
let bread be brought,  
And lay the feast.

ODYSSEUS. A cup of greeting, Sir,  
With but a splash to reconcile the gods.

*(A servant hands goblets.)*

To Zeus and all the deities above!  
Achilles' friends  
Pledge the bright hope of Hellas.  
*(They drink)* Nay, no more.  
We come not for a banquet; but in haste,  
In need, at night, in fear, as suppliants.  
Our camp's a jail. The Greeks are prison-  
ers;  
And Hector, clad in fury, rages nigh  
To burn the ships. This night decides the  
war.

Wilt thou put on the terror of thy strength  
And let displeasure go? The doom once  
done,

Thyself shall grieve the deepest in the end.  
Think, while sweet ruth permit thee! My  
dear lord,

Thy father, on the day he shipped thee  
forth,

Added a counsel "Hera and Athene  
Have made thee mighty: thou thyself  
must quell

The tempest of thy heart."

Thy griefs I'll not disparage: keep thy  
hate

For the Atreidae; they have done thee  
wrong

Shameworthy to themselves rather than  
thee.

But think of Hellas,—comrades done to  
death,

Achaia's cause in timeless ruin sunk,  
And what disgrace eternally shall hang  
On every boastful Greek that steered for  
Troy.

Gifts have we brought, the gold and silver  
wreck

Of many cities,—promises of more

When Troy is mastered. And, the cause  
of all,  
Briseis, the bright daughter of thy spear  
Waits by the tent without—

(*ACHILLES makes an unconscious gesture  
and ODYSSEUS pauses.*)

ACHILLES. God-born Odysseus, many-  
thoughted man,  
It seems I must deliver my whole mind,  
Or ye will nudge me to a compromise,  
Huddling about me. Hateful as Hell's gate  
Is he who keeps one story in his heart  
And on his tongue another. I must speak.  
The Grecian arguments have all been used  
And leave me unconvinced. Perpetual toil,  
The daily brunt of battle, death in all  
shapes  
And heart-consuming care (for like a bird  
That feeds her young I slaved to succor  
them)  
Have brought such thanks as cowardice  
might earn.  
The hero and the coward fare alike.  
The dawn has found me watching, and the  
day  
Rose bloody to receive me. I have warred  
In war's extremities. The sack of cities



Moved like a wake behind me: yet the spoil  
The Atreidae took, and left the sweat for  
me.

What is this war? For Helen is it not,  
A captured woman? Do the Atreidae then  
Conceive that they alone do love their  
brides

That my war-captured maiden,—whom I  
loved,—

They rive from me! I have been tricked,  
Odysseus:

And in their counsels never will I come  
Nor in their deeds again. The hateful gifts  
Are nothing to my heart, nor all the gold  
Of Orchomenos, Thebes or Africa  
Though it were piled to sandy pyramids,  
Is nothing to my heart, where sits a stain  
That such things wash not off. The guarded  
treasure

Within the Archer's rocky top of Delphi  
Is purchasable booty: but man's life  
Unpurchasably beats within his bosom.  
Bribes touch me not, Odysseus. Go ye back.  
For I myself, at dawn, am like to sail.  
Then go ye back. If ye have mind to watch,  
Ye'll see my ships at daybreak heading out  
Towards Lemnos.

(*A pause.*)

PHOENIX. Achilles, canst thou brook a  
word from one—

Old Phoenix, thy old nurse, whom Peleus  
chose

To be thy watch-dog. Later, in the fields  
Of peace and war I taught thee manliness;  
And conduct in the turmoil of the world.

Thou knowest I cannot leave thee: if thou  
sail

I sail with thee, Achilles. For these gifts,  
Count them not bribes; the great ones of  
the earth

Accept the meed of greatness. Were they  
all,—

If the Atreidae thought to save their spleen  
And buy thee back with gold, my voice  
should clamor,

Bidding thee nurse thy grievance and thy  
hate.

But there's a deeper drift when penitence  
Sues to just wrath. The gods are moved  
by prayer.

Those gods whose virtue we but imitate,  
Through penitential act and sacrifice  
Melt toward the offender, yea, forgive his  
guilt.

Prayers are the daughters of Almighty  
Zeus.

Withered and lame, they creep with looks  
askance

Behind a crime, pursuing the offence.

For anger's masterful and light of heel,  
And still outruns them toward the scathe  
of men.

And him that heeds God's daughters they  
will heed

When his time comes to pray. But if a  
man

Deny the claim or turn them rudely off

They rush to Zeus and supplicate his doom;

And the unpitying wretch is penalized

To the last farthing. Yield to them, my  
son,

For every brave man's reverence is their  
due;

Put not to shame this journey of thy  
friends

Whose embassy is not to save their ships

But thee, Achilles, thee their champion.

For, Sir, bethink thee, once the ships are  
burnt

Thy name burns with them. Vainly mayst  
thou plunge,

Vainly seek honor on the plains of Troy.

ACHILLES. Phoenix, I seek my honor from  
the gods.

When day shall streak the sky I launch my  
ships,

With thee beside me: stay thou in the tent.

AJAX. God-like Odysseus, let us leave at  
once.

Our friends await us, and Achilles' heart  
Is pitiless. He hugs his injury.

(*To* ACHILLES.)

Many's the man who for a murdered  
brother

Nay, for his son, has ta'en the recompense  
And let the murder die. But thee, cold man,  
The gods have filled with wrath unslakable  
Because of one chance girl. Thy friends  
are naught,

The hearth-guests and companions of thy  
youth

Who love thee—thou insult'st and turn'st  
away.

ACHILLES. Ajax, thou speakest with a  
truthful heart

All as thou see'st. But comrade, more's  
within—

I love thee and would honor all of you.

But then the fang of the Atreidae strikes.  
—They use me like a villain and a slave!  
And in me swells a power ye cannot sense  
That floods me like a sea. Good friends, go  
home,

I will bethink me. Brothers of this war,  
Thus far ye win me. That if Hector come  
Raging to burn my ships beside this tent,  
I'll loose my rage and let a fury free  
Shall burn him from the earth!

## THE WRATH OF ACHILLES.

### 2. THE DEATH OF PATROCLUS, AND THE NEW ARMOR.

SCENE. *Outside ACHILLES' Tent. ACHILLES Alone.*

ACHILLES. Patroclus, I have sent thee to  
the war  
And cannot aid thee. Now I find, too late,  
'Tis harder to await a battle's issue  
Than fight myself. (*Calling*) Briseis, girl,  
Briseis! (*Enter BRISEIS.*)  
Come there no tidings from the sandy bed  
Of old Scamander?

BRISEIS. None, Sir.

ACHILLES. Yet I heard  
The huddling clash of routed chariots  
And horses screaming, as they do in fright.  
It swelled upon the breeze—

BRISEIS. But not this way.

ACHILLES. My heart misgives me that I  
let him go.

The gods have evil days in store for us.  
My mother prophesied that while I live  
The bravest of us should by Trojan hands  
Be sent beyond the sunlight. What if he—  
Patroclus! He's no more. He's dead,  
Briseis!

BRISEIS. Pray heaven it be not he!

ACHILLES. I sent him out to beat the Tro-  
jans off  
And save the ships; but strongly counseled  
him

Never to venture in the wider field,  
Though every god should smile and lure  
him on.

This for his safety's sake—and for mine  
own.

The Greeks must not be saved except  
through me.

BRISEIS. Belike the Trojans, taking him for  
you,  
Seeing he wore your armor—

ACHILLES. Ay, Briseis,  
That armor! At my mother's marriage-  
feast,—

Thetis, my mother, daughter of the sea  
Wedding the mortal Peleus,—all the gods

Joined in a present to the mortal groom;  
And that celestial armor was the gift.

BRISEIS. Alas, if he should lose it!

ACHILLES. He will not  
Think to be eminent apart from me;  
Nor must he play the hero by himself.  
He is my shadow and mine inner soul;  
I love him as that softer part of me  
That's lost, except in him. And would to  
heaven  
That Zeus, Athena, and far-darting Phoe-  
bus  
Might slaughter every Trojan, and let rot  
Every Greek soldier on the Asian shore,  
That he and I, alone escaping death,  
Might plant the banner on Troy's battle-  
ments  
And end the war alone!

BRISEIS. O good Patroclus,  
Dear to the slave-girl was thy gentleness!  
Upon the day my father's city fell  
Three brothers saw I perish in an hour;  
The husband they had given me, pierced  
with bronze  
Lay in the gateway. Him Achilles slew.



Yet thou, Patroclus, would'st not let me  
mourn,

But toldst me I should be Achilles' bride;  
Thou'dst burn a torch upon my wedding  
day

In happy Phthia!—I bless the thought of  
thee;

For ever wast thou gentle with the weak.

ACHILLES. Hush, girl! I hear a messenger.  
(*Enter ANTILOCHUS.*)

Out with thy business, man! How goes the  
war?

ANTILOCHUS. Son to wise-hearted Peleus,  
great Achilles,—

ACHILLES. Thy news?

ANTILOCHUS. Thou'lt grieve to hear it.

ACHILLES. And Patroclus—

ANTILOCHUS. Lies dead upon the field; the  
battle burns  
About his naked body.

ACHILLES. And the armor—

ANTILOCHUS. Is held by Hector of the  
dancing plume.

ACHILLES. Now may the gods burn incense  
to themselves  
I'll no more trust them! Is the armor  
gone?

ANTILOCHUS. Listen, Achilles: — Thou  
did'st send him forth  
Arrayed in gleaming armor like the sun,  
Thy father's gear; and as Patroclus  
plunged  
Across the Trojan plain, thy Myrmidons  
Mowed the thick ranks of Ilian chivalry  
And slew what panic left them; for the rout  
Fled to the doors of Troy. He, not content,  
But moving on the whirlwind of his fate  
Mounts the black wall; and would have  
ta'en the town,—

ACHILLES. I did forbid him to approach  
the town!

ANTILOCHUS. Thrice doth his fury scale  
the battlement  
And Troy had fallen then; but that Apollo,  
Rising behind the rampart, beats him back.  
“Off!” shouts the angry god, “’Tis not  
for thee  
To capture Ilium, nor for him behind thee,  
Thy master great Achilles, Peleus' son.”

With that the eyes of the god roll terribly;  
He smites Patroclus with the flat of his  
    hand,  
Thus. The helmet rolls along the ground,  
The spear in splinters falls, the corslet's  
    rent,  
And poor Patroclus stands  
Rocked by an earthquake. Sick, he leaves  
    the field,  
Hemmed by his friends, and while he stag-  
    gers thus  
Comes Hector with a band of Dardan youth  
And runs him through the unresisting body.

ACHILLES. And I not there!

ANTILOCHUS. Your horses hung their heads  
To hide the tear-drops with their streaming  
    mane  
To see his fall.  
The armor Hector took, and donned it  
    straight,  
Leaving the body to a short-lived rescue.  
For ere our friends could lug it half a rood,  
Back swooped the Trojans in a ragged  
    horde,  
And stayed us for a fight. From our side  
    now

Rushed to the rescue every warrior;  
And round the body rose the clang of war,  
And dust of the contending combatants,  
And mist of black miasma sent by Zeus  
To hide the blind and bloody controversy,  
Which for twelve hours beneath a blazing  
sun—

For all was bright upon the dazzling plain,  
Except the moving frenzy where this cloud  
Dragged its black banners streaming to the  
sky,

With howls of dying men about the field,  
And rolled the dizzy fighters in the dust;  
Till by the act of Zeus the Greeks pre-  
vailed,—

Ajax and Ajax fending Hector off,  
And all the rest dragging the abject body,  
Stained by the blood of many warriors  
Besides its own. Thus fleeing, thus they  
came

Like a disordered flock of little birds  
Before the hawk. So went Patroclus forth;  
So he returned.

ACHILLES. (*To BRISEIS and ANTILOCHUS.*)  
Why hold ye me and hang upon my hands?

BRISEIS. Lest thou shalt do thy life a violence  
Through access of despair.

ACHILLES. No fear, no fear.  
My doom was written on the firmament  
Ere we set out; but his was not foretold.  
O I have sent the dearest soul to death  
That ever friend betrayed! Couldst thou  
not wait,  
But thou must rush to an heroic end,  
Outrunning mine? O fools that trust the  
gods  
Who, in commingling with the race of men  
Play with them merely, and our hearts  
must pay  
The joys they cheat us with. What rage  
I had  
God-like and self-sustaining as the sun!  
Zeus nods and I must crack. O tender  
heart!

Patroclus, my companion, our one saint  
Among the band of ruffians, silly words  
I told thy father—how I'd fetch thee home  
Safe to Opoeïs after Troy was sacked.  
Now both of us shall redden the same soil,  
Thou first, I soon: a single golden urn  
Shall house the mingled ashes of our bones

And thus I'll repossess thee. The same  
mound

Shall be our sepulchre, and mariners,  
Rounding this windy corner of the sea,  
Shall tell the traveler "Friend, behold the  
cairn,

Achilles' and Patroclus' resting-place;  
Troy lay beyond."

Thy burial shall be rich!

For to the gods above I dedicate  
Twelve noble Trojan youths upon thy pyre  
To bloody slaughter. Hector's head I'll  
bring—

Thy murderous slayer's—and the golden  
arms—

—Whose body shall be given to the dogs.  
And thou shalt lie in long-remembered state  
Surrounded by the wail of captive slaves,  
Deep-breasted Trojan women, and our own.  
Gold, incense, plunder, riches I have drawn  
From all the Asian cities shall be piled  
About thee, my Patroclus, and thy soul  
Shall be attended with such obsequies  
As roll with kings toward Hades. O Gaunt  
Death!—

On-stalking shadow of the world beneath,—  
And thou above, great, smiling, heartless  
Zeus,—

Grant to Achilles but one torch of life  
To kindle the great pyre, and then let Fate  
Swiftly enclose him.

ANTILOCHUS. What! wilt thou fight again?

ACHILLES. I, fight, young man!

ANTILOCHUS. Thou'lt lead the Achaians to  
the siege once more?

May I report it so?

ACHILLES. Lo now, he understands not.  
Know'st thou not

Achilles is the war? Tell it the Atreidae.  
And let them call a council of the chiefs  
Whereat I shall renounce my grievances,  
Swear brotherhood, and after on the altars  
Burn to the witnessing gods a sacrifice,  
With solemn pourings for the mutual bond.  
The poison's cured in me, in thee, in them.  
The gods cast rabid Atè out of heaven  
Because the fury plagued them; now man-  
kind

Catch the infatuate vixen's fell disease  
And rend themselves to rags. The war's  
resumed.

Tell the Atreidae that the war begins.  
I am the war.

(*Exit* ANTILOCHUS. BRISEIS *goes into the tent.*)

O mother, mother, fatal was that feast!  
Would thou hadst wed an ocean deity,  
And Peleus some shore-maiden, like himself,  
Mortal and earthy; so this splintered soul,  
Unequal mixture of mortality  
With godhead, had not lived unfit for life,  
And died untimely. Him that was my  
friend  
And understood me,—when like boys we'd  
sit  
Chatting apart for hours,—they have killed.

(*Enter at the back* THETIS.)

THETIS. My child, why dost thou weep?  
What suffering  
Touches thy heart? Speak, and hide  
nothing, dear.  
Are not the Greeks, as Zeus did promise me,  
Walled with their ships, because they  
slighted thee?  
ACHILLES. Mother, they've killed Patroclus.  
That dear head  
Is gone forever. And thy marriage gift  
divine,



The heavenly armor's lost! On Hector's  
back—  
Whence I will rive it for the funeral  
Of my beloved.

THETIS. O my blessed child,  
Swift is thy fate; for after Hector's death  
Thine own must follow.

ACHILLES. Would that I had died  
Or e'er I lost him, died defending him,  
Died in some blaze of honor at the wall,  
Instead of sitting like a lump of earth.  
I—I—the best of them, the warrior.  
But wrath's like trickling honey in the  
throat;  
It mounts like incense to the incensèd  
brain;  
Delirium's in it. Now the fit is by,  
I must fight Hector. Even Heracles,  
The Darling son of Zeus, might not shun  
death,  
The noose of time and Hera's jealousy  
Subdued him. When my meted hour shall  
sound,—  
O may it find me in the foughten field;  
That Trojan wives may feel the martial  
hand

That sweeps their lords away. Dissuade  
me not;  
For my determination is to fight.

THETIS. Nay, but dear child, indeed it's no  
disgrace  
To shield a danger'd friend from dreadful  
death.  
Thine arms are gone; yet Hector keeps  
them not  
Forever, for the doom is over him.

*(She turns and produces the new armor.)*

Here have I brought thee more. The cun-  
ning wright  
Hephaestus, forged them for my godlike  
boy  
That runs to war. For headstrong is the  
lad,  
And in his babyhood his eye would shine  
If he but saw a sword.

ACHILLES. Ah, you will let me go!

THETIS. The gods so order it.

## THE WRATH OF ACHILLES.

### 3. THERSITES ON THE GREAT RECONCILIATION.

SCENE. *Outside ACHILLES' Tent. (Enter THERSITES.)*

THERSITES. I have had the best meal since coming to Troy; and have shook hands with the heroes. Now for a chat with Briseis,—a modest maid, and next to Helen the cause of most trouble among the immortal villains of this villainous war. (*Calling.*) Briseis, Briseis, I say! (*Enter BRISEIS.*)

BRISEIS. Who calls?—Away, Thersites! Peleus' son will return and belabor thee with the tent-pin. Remember thy welts!

THERSITES. I have not laughed so heartily since Agamemnon hurt his leg! Pshaw, wench, the heroes are safe drunk for three hours yet. Peleus' son hangs on the Atreidae, and paws them and pours liquor down's waistcoat. Have you not heard of the great reconciliation? Zeus left off his

thundering and came to smell the fat. The Assembly, the great Assembly!—Every steward and camp follower—with skewers in their hands, and sweating like black Egyptians,—ran to the love-gathering; and the lords limped, every man with his physician behind him. “Not so fast, good sir! Remember your wounds, my lord!” Diomed hath a cracked ankle. Odysseus is gored by Trojan bulls. Agamemnon comes with the cramp-crawl, Euripylus with an arrow in’s thigh,—groaning all. But the rout was such a gathering of vermin as never crawled out of Miletus.

BRISEIS. How mean you?

THERSITES. Why, those that have lain hid during the hot weather of battle now sprawl every one to get a peep at the great Achilles, Peleus’ son, you have heard of him?

Well, the Grecians were never seen together before,—most of them with towels in their hands,—stewards and pot-boys and friends to the camp, the chorus in the Greek comedy. Filth, sirs! and the off-scourings of Hellas. And in the front row of the assembly sat the demi-gods; though

these couldn't stand up, but leaned thus with dignity on their staves, and cocked their broken legs at one another like tragedians. Now then, Achilles stands himself in the midst,—for he was the only divinely-begotten hero of them all whose legs would function;—and it did him good, too, to stretch himself after his long, sacred, gloomy, godlike and somewhat monotonous wrath.

I have not laughed so hard since Odysseus forgot his ploughing and found his wits. Achilles now, in the midst of all, proclaims a silence, and says, says he, “I never cared for the girl at all any way.”

BRISEIS. What girl, Thersites?

THERSITES. Why thee, thou fool. “Would she had died,” said Achilles, “would she had died the day I sacked Lurnessos; so had I never said a word against my good friend Agamemnon, my dear brothers, the Atreidae, my lords and leaders here, whom before heaven and in the face of these camp-followers I love and honor as the parents who nursed me.” “It’s all along of Zeus,” cries Agamemnon, and tells an auld wives’ tale of Hera and Atè and Hercules and the

twelve labors of Teiresias' Jackass, till Odysseus mops his brow and whispers Menelaus "Let's back to the fighting to wake us up!"

"It was all a dream," says Achilles, "and the gods are to blame for what has taken place." "Let's eat," says Odysseus, "Let's fight," says Achilles, "Let's worship the gods and magnify them forever," shout the skewer-carriers. "Let him swear first," says Odysseus, "that the maid Briseis is as pure as the snow from Mount Ida before the spring freshets." "Ay, Agamemnon must swear that!" says Achilles, "or I'll have his blood."

BRISEIS. Me, mean you?

THERSITES. Ay, thee, wench. Thou art the cause of all, under Zeus and the rest of religion. Thou art the cause.

BRISEIS. And what answered Agamemnon?

THERSITES. Swore like a gentleman, wench. Faith, he was in the swearing mood: he'd have sworn anything.

BRISEIS. What did he say?

THERSITES. Say? "By the gods below," says he, "and by the ever-living night, the mother of wicked thoughts; by the revolving sun and the devolving planets, who see all; by Asia, and the Pleiades, I swear that the said Briseis, the house-maid, is a barbarian woman, she does not interest me, she has never drawn my eyes for a moment. Or may Hades suck me down!

BRISEIS. He swore to that?

THERSITES. Laugh, wench, it's the only way. These be heroes.

Then they fetched a pig and prayed mightily, standing by the loud crashing ocean's waves. And Menelaus held the pig, and Odysseus, drawing a rusty knife, cuts him off three hairs from the nether-lip on the nor' west side of the jaw; and drawing his voice from his nethermost belly, says he: "In the name of Zeus, Amen!"—While all sat by in fitting silence. And then with eyes up-lift to heaven he scatters the hairs on the fire, and adds salt and flour meal; and then all shout at once. Then spake Achilles, holding his eye thus: "Father Zeus, great are the delusions thou

sendest on mankind.” At this I cracked my jerkin and laid hold of seven scullions to choke my laughing,—for I’d not miss a word. So Achilles prayed eloquently for about seven minutes, and laid all upon the gods; and then Agamemnon seized the boar by the hind leg and flung him sea-ward, and all cried “Supper!” and I left them pouring libations. And I left them drunk, all except Achilles, who went to ponder the corpse of Patroclus. He’s for neither eating nor drinking till he has caught twelve young noble Trojans,—fat ones, he says,—and slain them in the holiness of his self-sacrifice on the pyre of his beloved.

And Hector—Hector’s to be fed to the dogs, if they can catch him. Nay, tak’t not so seriously, good Briseis. This is war. Hast thou ever a cup of something about the tent? I cannot drink decently at their beastly sacrifices.



## THE WRATH OF ACHILLES.

### 4. THE DEATH OF HECTOR AND THE SACRIFICE OF LYKAON.

SCENE. *Before the Tent of* ACHILLES.

*(Enter a Greek soldier with five young Trojan prisoners bound. One of these is LYKAON.)*

SOLDIER. Ho there, who's within! Auto-  
medon!  
I come from Peleus' son!

AUTOMEDON. *(Entering from the tent.)*  
What tidings dost thou bring?

SOLDIER. Achilles charges thee to leave  
these bound,  
And let them lie in heaps, like panting kids  
Ripe for the knife. These five make up the  
twelve  
With whom he'll fatten up the ritual flame  
About Patroclus' corpse. They're well de-  
scended

From Trojan princes and old demi-gods.

AUTOMEDON. I shall obey. (*Calls*) Briseis!

(*Enter* BRISEIS.)

BRISEIS. More sad faces—  
But these are almost children.

SOLDIER. It's his thought  
To slay all men; but as a sacrifice  
Offer the merest youths.

LYKAON. Killed in cold blood by this un-  
pitying man!

AUTOMEDON. (*To* BRISEIS.)  
Confine them with the rest.

LYKAON. Shall we be killed?

BRISEIS. Perchance the kindling heavens  
will melt his heart.

LYKAON. Do but untie our hands, gentle  
Briseis.  
How can I clasp him as a suppliant  
And hold his knees, unless my hands be  
free?

AUTOMEDON. If he shall find the manacles  
unloosed  
He'll kill thee in his fit.

BRISEIS. And if he do?  
Think'st thou, Automedon, I care for life?  
My youngest brother was as this boy's twin,  
His eyes as heavy, like the trusting fawn's.  
Him I saw slaughtered by the edge of  
bronze.

I'll loose the lad to supplicate Achilles,  
For all his roaring.

(AUTOMEDON, BRISEIS and the prisoners go into the tent. Exit soldier. Enter AGAMEMNON, AJAX and ODYSSEUS.)

ODYSSEUS. I lost him in the fray. Here at  
his tent  
There may be news. This tumult of the  
sky  
And the river floods, that make the plain  
a sea,  
Have routed us again. The son of Peleus  
Fights on alone, but where or how I know  
not.

(Enter ANTILOCHUS, hurriedly and out of breath.)

ANTILOCHUS. My lords, I've sought you long—

AJAX. How goes the war?

ANTILOCHUS. Changed from a contest be-  
tween mortal powers  
To the dark strife of gods. Achilles' rage  
Found the Scamander in his path of war  
All choked with fleeing Trojans. In he  
wades,  
Reddening the waters with the scythe of  
bronze;  
And flings the bodies to the fishy deeps,  
Till foam and blood and dead men fill the  
stream,  
And the offended river-god, half smothered  
To find such loathed obstruction in his  
veins,  
Swells them with draughts of torrents from  
the crags  
And sky-fed cataracts. The boiling flood  
Rolls seaward, like a sea, to break the dam.  
Achilles braves the surge: it masters him.  
He flees: the angry river over-rolls him;  
And but that Hera saved him—  
Ay, but then  
The heavens grew black, the gods them-  
selves took part;  
Hera, Athena, Artemis and Ares  
Stalked o'er the field,—unearthly bellow-  
ings,

As of ten thousand bulls, and piercing  
                  shrieks,  
Immortal, horrid!—while the giant forms  
Making our pigmy warriors seem like mice,  
Loomed through the murk; and on the echo-  
                  ing plain  
Bolt after shining bolt was cast by Zeus  
Through night and blindness. 'Twas the  
                  judgment day.  
Troy's fate is sealed; 'twas settled there  
                  above,  
And these convulsions are her agony.  
All's ruled from Heaven.

AJAX. Here comes a warrior.

*(Enter a messenger.)*

What of the fight, man? Is Achilles safe?

MESSENGER. Ay, he's safe.

AJAX. But where and how? What else?

MESSENGER. Hector lies slain beneath  
                  Achilles hand.

ALL. Hector slain!

AJAX. Hector is slain? Why then the war's  
                  at end!

MESSANGER. I know not that: but this I  
saw:—

It was the saddest death e'er chronicled  
Since wars began. His gods deserted him;  
He standing thus, with unprotesting eye,  
Receives the stroke of fate. 'Twas terrible.

AJAX. How, tell us how!

MESSANGER. First comes Achilles raging  
from the ford,  
All Troy before him. These within the  
walls

Are safely clapped. But Hector stays with-  
out,

Against all clamors from the battlements  
Whence Priam, the old king, and Hecuba  
Fling him pathetic prayers and supplica-  
tions

To come inside. He bides Achilles' swoop:  
Yea for a time, but when the god-inspired  
And blazing might of Peleus' wrathful child  
Beamed on him fully, Hector turned and  
fled.

Thrice round the walls of Troy—like some  
bad dream

Where the pursuer cannot catch his prey  
Nor it escape—the agony went round,  
Without or gain or loss. The gods above

Stood in amaze; 'twas awful. Then great  
Zeus

Holding his scales aloft, throws in the lots  
For all to view, and Hector's sinks in the  
scale.

Now all turns pageant. Hector sees his  
end;

And great Achilles, motioning to us  
To launch no javelins, moves upon the prey,  
Choosing the life-spot with a practised eye,  
Falls his great sword on Hector's yielding  
neck.

And so he dies.

ODYSSEUS. But spoke not—

MESSENGER. Yes. With a sad and glassy  
calm, his eye,  
Measuring the slayer, "Ever wast thou  
cruel,"

Saith dying Hector. "Thou'lt remember  
me

When thou see'st Paris and the god Apollo,  
The day death takes at the Skaian Gate."  
Achilles nods and mutters, calls his men;—  
'Tis best you know it soon. He comes this  
way!

ODYSSEUS. Brings he the body with him?

MESSSENGER.

Ay, that's it!

AJAX. That's it, but how?

MESSSENGER. With thongs he pierced the  
fallen hero's feet,  
And leaping in the chariot, huddles in  
The rescued arms; then, shouting to the  
steeds,  
Drives like a madman o'er the dizzy plain,  
Dragging the corpse of Hector.

AJAX.

What, a Greek  
And with unmanly frenzy maim the dead!  
Achilles mangle Hector!

MESSSENGER.

All his locks  
Bedraggled, all his godly features gone,—  
Defaced in undecipherable ruin.  
Priam and Hecuba upon the walls  
Rending their scanty locks beheld the crime,  
Whose author, our great captain,—

AJAX.

But he comes!  
I hear the clank of him.

*(Enter ACHILLES, bloody, begrimed, and terrible. As he enters he is speaking to a warrior who follows him.)*



ACHILLES. Bestow the body: let the army  
see it;  
That every soldier may anoint his sword  
In the carrion, ere I chop it for the dogs.

ODYSSEUS. (*To ACHILLES*) Methinks the time  
is come for consultation.

ACHILLES. Odysseus, thou'rt a fool!

AJAX. So am not I, Achilles!

AGAMEMNON. Nor I!

AJAX. For shame Achilles thus to treat a  
foe!

The noble kindly Hector! It's unmeet  
And horrible; the gods will punish it.

ACHILLES. Both gods and men will do their  
uttermost,  
No doubt; no doubt, good Ajax. To your  
tents,  
Commanders!

AJAX. To our tents, good Peleus' son?  
Art thou grown king, and must we kiss thy  
foot?

Thou shameless and barbarian conqueror!  
I tell thee, Hector was a noble foe,  
And not deserved such treatment.

ACHILLES. Men in war  
Deserve what they receive. What knowest  
thou?

This Hector slew Patroclus, in whose death  
My life is stabbed beyond all mortal probe.  
Now lies Patroclus yonder. Had I heard  
That Peleus, my old father, had been slain,  
Yea thou, my son, my Neoptolemus,  
That waitest my return in rocky Skyros,  
And never shalt behold me,—hadst *thou*  
died

'Twould less have cut me than the empty  
tent.

Ajax, look yonder. In that broken armor  
Perished my life. But come, my vows are  
due.

Patroclus, mark, the tale of death is full;  
All that I promised,—thou shalt have them  
all!

Go home, good Ajax; get thee to thy tent.  
I must fulfill a sacrificial vow.

(*Exeunt* AGAMEMNON, AJAX *and* ODYSSEUS.)

Briseis, are the prisoners safely kept?

BRISEIS. Yes.

ACHILLES. Set the lamp by the couch.

BRISEIS. I will, my lord.

(*Exit* BRISEIS.)

ACHILLES. I cannot sleep; but I will rest  
awhile.

All dead. My home was here but yesterday.

Now all the joy and comfort of return  
Mock me from the ashes. When I thought  
of death

'Twas of my own,—how thou shouldst  
bury me,

And having heaped a mound and breathed  
a prayer,

Shouldst steer Achilles' spirit back to  
Phthia,

To teach my son; how thou shouldst fetch  
the lad,

And show him all the glories of our house,  
Telling him stories of his ancestors

And the great days at Troy. I know not  
why,—

A fit of weeping's on me.

(ACHILLES *is about to recline on the rugs,*  
*when* LYKAON *enters running and clasps his*  
*knees.*)

LYKAON. Mercy! Have mercy, O divine  
Achilles,  
A suppliant that has eaten of thy food!  
Thou canst not kill me: in the eyes of Zeus  
I am a prisoner, old Priam's son.  
Lykaon is my name, I ate thy salt  
When thou didst capture me a year ago  
And soldst me as a slave. O hast thou not  
A father or a son? Thou hast a son!  
Mercy! A suppliant! Mercy!

ACHILLES. Thee! Hector's brother? Spare  
thee, thou young snake!  
I will exterminate the nest of you.

LYKAON. Only half-brother: his half-  
brother only!

ACHILLES. I was all mercy till Patroclus  
died;  
Now I'm all steel. Come friend! Tut, tut,  
my boy,  
Death is not dreadful. Death's a deity.  
Patroclus dies,—a better man than thou.  
See'st thou how big and strong I am my-  
self,—  
Born of a hero, mothered by a nymph;—  
Yet must I die, at dawn, at noon, at eve,  
When Ares sends a summoning javelin,

Or great Apollo from his singing bow  
Looses the shaft that finds my heart its  
home.

(ACHILLES *silently delivers* LYKAON *to*  
BRISEIS, *on whose shoulder the boy falls*  
*weeping.* BRISEIS *and* LYKAON *enter the*  
*tent.*)

Would that the spicy beams of Priam's  
chamber  
Had been the kindling! I will lift a blaze  
To dim the moon,—while men in Samo-  
thrace  
Think Troy's afire.

## THE WRATH OF ACHILLES.

### 5. THE GHOST OF PATROCLUS: PRIAM AND ACHILLES.

SCENE. *Inside ACHILLES' Tent.* ACHILLES alone. *Enter a servant.*

SERVANT. O son of Peleus, most divine  
                  Achilles,  
The Atreidae and the army send thee  
                  thanks  
As to a god for their deliverance.

ACHILLES. Let them thank Zeus.

SERVANT.                   They do: only attending  
                  Thy presence at the feast.

ACHILLES.                                   I'm for no feast.  
Tell them I neither eat nor drink nor wash  
                  nor sleep  
While that the ceremonial of my love  
Lies unfulfilled. Around Patroclus' bier  
At sunrise for twelve days I hale the corpse  
Of Hector at my heaven-born horses' heels.  
By night I weep; by day I pace the sea.

Say every wound of war and dirt of battle  
Lies freshly on me;—'tis my wedding rayment,  
And these, my nuptials. Ask the generals  
If such a man would grace their festival,  
And bid them eat without me.

*(Exit servant.)*

They're for home  
For Argos, Athens, Ithaca they're off.  
This war's played to an end, and all the  
actors  
Disband exultingly.—There's prey enough;  
Women, gold, tapestry, tripods; Troy was  
rich.  
They've but to eat, to pillage and depart.  
For me there's no beyond.  
His body is laid up in precious drugs,  
And when the fiery column takes the breeze  
My life goes up with it. My head is heavy;  
But if I close my eyes I'm fighting Hector.  
'Twas a long day.

*(He lies down on a pile of rugs. Enter the Ghost of PATROCLUS and stands at the back, behind the sleeping ACHILLES.)*

PATROCLUS. Comrade, thou sleepest. Is that  
friend forgot

Whom living, thou wast ever tender of?  
'Tis I, Patroclus. Brother, bury me,  
That I may pass the porch of Hades' Halls;  
For now I wander, and the eager shades  
Prevent me at the river. Reach thy hand!  
If once the fire touch me, I am gone.  
Ah, playmate, all our sweet old intercourse  
Is ended. Fate hath ope'd his jaws on me:  
I'm lost, Achilles! Dost thou mind the time  
Thy father first received me in his home?  
Peleus, old horseman Peleus, took me in  
To be his boy's companion,—little recking  
How soon one urn should hide the dust of  
both,  
And he receive it in his trembling hands.  
Achilles,—dost not know me, my Achilles?

*(Vanishes.)*

ACHILLES. *(In his sleep.)*

Thou comest, O thou brother to my heart,  
Bidding me do my very purposes.  
Fear not: I've promised thee!  
But can'st thou not embrace me, brother  
dear?

*(Wakes.)*

Patroclus, my Patroclus! All night long  
Patroclus stood beside me, urging me



About his burial;—in looks, his very self,—  
Weeping to break his heart, beseeching me.  
But when I thought to fold him in my arms  
He uttered a thin wailing, and sank back  
Under the earth.—O heaven, in Hades'

Halls

Be souls and images; but for the mind,  
No trace of it! By Zeus, it's horrible!  
Sleep is the danger: I must watch all night,  
And rest while waking.

*(He seats himself.)*

When my father learns  
How I am widowed, he will die of grief;  
No news of me, and my good angel gone.  
My father, Peleus, that old sacred man,  
To die without my kiss! I leaped away  
To where Fame beckoned,  
And flung no glance behind. O father dear  
Thy pang hath followed me.

*(He has covered his face with his hands,  
and when he takes them away, PRIAM is  
kneeling before him, clasping his knees.)*

ACHILLES. The Ghost of Priam now! O  
Father Zeus  
Protect me from these spirits of the dead

That torture me. I killed thee not, old man!  
Hades doth walk the earth!

PRIAM. Remember the old knight, divine  
Achilles,  
Thy father, Peleus, sunk in the slough of  
years,  
Tormented by his neighbors, sick, alone,  
Unfended and unloved. Thou are alive;  
And hourly all day long he longs for thee,  
And thy homecoming from the dreadful  
war.

I am a wretched man, broken and old:  
Many brave sons were born in Troy to me  
But none like Hector;—whom these mur-  
derous hands  
Slew as he strove to save his fatherland.  
(Would'st thou do likewise?) For the  
body's ransom  
Is Priam come, old Priam Hector's father  
And King of Troy,—the wretchedest of  
men,  
And yet the boldest; for what father yet  
Dared to lift up his fingers to the beard  
Of him that slew his son? For Peleus' sake  
Give me the body of my boy, Achilles,  
That I may lay my cheek against his body;

And pay the gods their due. I bring thee  
wealth,  
The deepest riches from Troy's treasury,  
In honorable ransom for the dead.

*(He raises his hands toward the face of  
ACHILLES and remains motionless.)*

ACHILLES. Alas, old man, what sorrows  
hast thou known!

And dost thou come alone, at night, un-  
armed

To me that killed thy many noble sons?  
Thy heart's of steel. But there's no cure  
for grief,

Which Zeus inculcates into human hearts,  
Compelling us to live and live in pain.

Peleus was happy, famous, rich and wise;  
The gods brought gifts unstinted to his  
home,

Gave him a bride from heaven. His only  
lack

Was children: but a single son had he;—  
And in that son more sorrow than the world  
Can countervail with all its luxury.

Thou too in the world's eye wast eminent;  
Thy Kingdom was the envy of the earth;  
Thy sons and daughters like a diadem

Crowned the whole region;—Priam's sons  
and daughters  
Were glory's glory, Troy's embellishment.  
But lo, the heavenly power intervenes,  
And fills thy land with battle. Nay desist;  
Thy fate's the common one, desist, old man.  
Thy sorrow cannot raise him up again,  
Nor keep back new despair.  
Sit in my seat and comfort thee awhile;  
The sword that pierces thee is in my heart:  
One fate unites us.

PRIAM. Nay, thou son of Heaven,  
I'll not be set upon thy household throne,  
While Hector lies neglected in the pen!  
Give me the body first, and take the gifts.  
Thou didst not kill me erst, nor canst not  
now!

ACHILLES. Beware, old man! Myself doth  
set him free;  
Not Priam and the gifts. Heaven hath pur-  
chased him,  
Not thy beseechment!  
The mind of Zeus to staunch my mother's  
tears  
Sent Hermes to thine aid, and brings thee  
here

Through bolts and bars and dangers manifest,  
God-guided to my tent. The power behind  
Shines through thee, foolish Priam. Vex  
me not,  
Lest I dishonor God by killing thee!

(PRIAM trembles and remains on the ground.)

ACHILLES. (*Calling.*) Automedon!

(*Enter AUTOMEDON.*)

Waits a strange chariot by the palisade?

AUTOMEDON. There does, my lord.

ACHILLES. Fetch it inside: unload the  
precious gifts,  
And stow them safely. Next, take Hector's  
body,  
Wash and anoint, and in a linen sheet  
wind it securely,—that he see it  
not,  
Before he reach his home. Call me again  
I'll lift it to the chariot myself.  
Forgive me, my beloved, if in Hades  
'Tis whispered that I sent thy murderer  
home.

Heaven doth control me;—and the gifts I  
take  
Are thine too,—thine too, ever.

(*To PRIAM.*)

Old man, the sons of Heaven have smiled  
on thee:  
Thy embassy's accomplished. Rosy dawn  
Shall speed the golden wheels that hurry  
thee,  
With Hector in thine arms to Hecuba.  
And there with joy and grief you'll bury  
him;  
And Troy shall weep, and incense shall go  
up;  
A funeral that fits his royal breed  
Shall Hector have. But now, Sir, you  
must eat.

(*He signs to AUTOMEDON to bring food  
and drink.*)

Niobe lost twelve children in a day,  
And yet the legend says she ate and drank.  
The golden rain from haughty Phoebus'  
bow  
Followed her boast. "For," said she, "I  
have twelve,

And Leto hath but two." The gods are  
    gods

And slay us for a whim. Our life is tears,  
Yet must we eat. And thou, divine old

Thine eye's a moon; each hand a continent.  
There's an illumination in thy look  
Bodes a beyond—

ACHILLES. 'Tis Hades, Hades, father,  
Shining through earthly limbs of natural  
clay,—

The light from Rhadamanthus' dark abode  
And Pluto's gemmy glare.

The shadows of the dead abide with me,  
And things that in my childhood were but  
dreams

Walk in the day. Thou featest with a  
man

Who dies to-morrow. Ay, thou too, thou  
too!

Dost stalk amongst us, Priam, with thine  
eyes

Staring as though the eyeballs were of  
glass,

And thou a bloody image! Nay, good sir,  
Good ancient Priam, eat thy meal in peace;  
Thy host's unmanned with fighting and  
with grief.

Eat, eat thy fill, and while thou sleepest  
sound,

I'll weep again. 'Tis only weeping cures  
me.



## THE WRATH OF ACHILLES.

### 6. THETIS SPEAKS.

SCENE. *The body of ACHILLES, clad in armor, lies on a low bier. The helmet rests on the ground. THETIS is discovered beside the bier.*

THETIS. Thou wast my wedding-gift,  
Achilles, dear.

When the gods forced me to a mortal's  
couch

The lackeys of Olympus laughed at Peleus;  
But me, made mortal by the gift of thee,  
They knew not, thought not of: they saw  
me not

Thus blindly dowered with glory, life and  
pain.

O thou great boy of the world, divine  
Achilles,

Pierced by Hyperion's shaft!—I heard thy  
cry.

Thus ever came I, Thetis, from the sea,  
Thy mother and thy goddess and thy slave.

Unchanged thou art, as when thine infant  
lip  
Would swell in anger, and thine eye blaze  
out  
With lightning from Olympus. Ah, my  
child,  
Thy short life leaves a glory in the world;  
And sea-born Thetis comes to guard thy  
tomb  
Beside the smiting music of the ocean,  
Where thou didst pace the sands and call  
on her  
In the great days of Troy.

—THE END—









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